What is claimed is:

1. An image data compression method for obtaining compressed image data to which compression information regarding compression processing is added upon compression of image data, the image data compression method comprising the step of:

adding new compression information regarding new compression processing to the compression information in the case where the compression information has already been added to the image data.

2. An image data compression method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

controlling a degree of compression of the image data based on the compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed.

3. An image data compression method as defined in Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an input of the new compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed; and

judging, from the compression information already added to the image data and the newly added compression information, a degree of quality degradation of the image data after the compression; and

issuing a warning in the case where the degree of quality degradation reaches a predetermined level or higher.

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4. An image data decompression method for obtaining decompressed image data by decompressing the compressed image data obtained by using the image data compression method defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, the image data decompression method comprising the step of:

decompressing the compressed image data based on the compression information added to the compressed image data.

5. An image display method for displaying the decompressed image data obtained by using the image data decompression method defined in Claim 4, the image display method comprising the step of:

displaying the compression information together with an image represented by the decompressed image data.

6. An image data compression apparatus for obtaining compressed image data to which compression information regarding compression processing is added upon compression of image data, the image data compression apparatus comprising:

compression means for adding new compression information regarding new compression processing to the compression information in the case where the compression information has already been added to the image data.

7. An image data compression apparatus as defined in Claim 6, wherein the compression means controls a degree of compression of the image data based on the compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed.

8. An image data compression apparatus as defined in Claim

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7 further comprising:

input means for receiving an input of the new compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed, wherein

the compression means judges, from the compression information already added to the image data and from the newly added compression information, a degree of quality degradation of the image data after the compression and issues a warning in the case where the quality degradation reaches a predetermined level or higher.

9. An image data decompression apparatus for obtaining decompressed image data by decompressing the compressed image data obtained by the image data compression apparatus defined in Claim 6, the image data decompression apparatus comprising:

decompression means for decompressing the compressed image data, based on the compression information added to the compressed image data.

10. An image data decompression apparatus for obtaining decompressed image data by decompressing the compressed image data obtained by the image data compression apparatus defined in Claim 7, the image data decompression apparatus comprising:

decompression means for decompressing the compressed image data, based on the compression information added to the compressed image data.

11. An image data decompression apparatus for obtaining decompressed image data by decompressing the compressed image

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data obtained by the image data compression apparatus defined in Claim 8, the image data decompression apparatus comprising:

decompression means for decompressing the compressed image data, based on the compression information added to the

5   compressed image data.

12. An image display apparatus for displaying the decompressed image data obtained by the image data decompression apparatus defined in any one of Claims 9 to 10, the image display apparatus displaying the compression information together with

10   an image represented by the decompressed image data.

13. An image data compression decompression system comprising the image data compression apparatus defined in any one of Claims 6 to 8 and the image data decompression apparatus defined in any one of Claims 9 to 10.

15   14. An image data compression decompression system as defined in Claim 12, further comprising the image display apparatus define in Claim 13.

15. A program to cause a computer to execute an image data compression method for obtaining compressed image data to which

20   compression information regarding compression processing is added upon compression of image data, the program comprising the procedure of:

adding new compression information regarding new compression processing to the compression information in the

25   case where the compression information has already been added to the image data.

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16. A program as defined in Claim 15, the program further comprising the procedure of:

controlling a degree of the compression of the image data based on the compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed.

17. A program as defined in Claim 16, the program further comprising the procedures of:

receiving an input of the new compression information when the image data having the compression information are compressed; and

judging, from the compression information already added to the image data and the newly added compression information, a degree of quality degradation of the image data after the compression; and

issuing a warning in the case where the degree of quality degradation reaches a predetermined level or higher.

18. A program to cause a computer to execute an image data decompression method for obtaining decompressed image data by decompressing the compressed image data obtained by using the image data compression method defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, the program comprising the procedure of:

decompressing the compressed image data based on the compression information added to the compressed image data.

19. A program to cause a computer to execute an image display method for displaying the decompressed image data obtained by using the image data decompression method defined

in Claim 4, the program comprising the procedure of:

displaying the compression information together with an image represented by the decompressed image data.